



City WellNews

Volume 2, Issue 11

Insurance & Benefits Division

December 2009

Holiday Survival Tips:

- Eat a light, healthy snack such as soup, fruit or cereal before parties. This will help you curb hunger and make better choices.
- Limit alcohol. Enjoy one alcoholic beverage if you must and then switch to diet soda or soda water with lime afterwards.
- Bring a low-fat holiday dish to the party. Better still, go home empty-handed!
- Keep minimal baked goods on hand this year. Only bake enough to give away or use for one festivity. After baking goodies, immediately fill the mixing bowl with hot soapy water; sampling batter packs on extra calories.
- Try to eat a large salad before most meals. Make sure vegetables take up half the room on most of your plates.

Source: www.foodandhealth.com



December Wellness Tips

Nutrition Tip

Brazil nuts are packed with magnesium and selenium, powerful antioxidants that may help prevent heart disease and cancer and protect prostate health. Selenium also helps lower LDL or “bad” cholesterol and reduces the incidence of blood clots and heart disease. Brazil nuts are so loaded and concentrated with selenium that you can get your recommended daily dose in just one.

Fitness Tip

Get moving for heart health. Participate in physical activity of moderate intensity, like brisk-walking, for at least 30 minutes on most, and preferably all, days of the week. If you use your busy life as your excuse, then you have to know there is NO excuse. You can do 10 minutes in the morning, 10 minutes in the afternoon and 10 minutes in the evening. Add five minutes the next week for a total of three 15-minute segments. Add another five the next week and you will get the recommended one hour of activity each day.

Health Tip

The combination of a low-saturated fat and low-cholesterol diet, physical activity, and weight control has many positive effects on your health. In addition to lowering your LDL cholesterol, it can help raise your HDL cholesterol, lower triglycerides, lower your blood pressure, reduce your chance of developing diabetes, improve your fitness level, reduce the tendency to develop blood clots, and decrease stress.

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Holiday Depression and Stress

The holiday season for most people is a fun time of the year filled with parties, celebrations, and social gatherings with family and friends. But for many people, it is a time filled with sadness, self-reflection, loneliness, and anxiety.

What Causes the Holiday Blues?

Sadness is a truly personal feeling. What makes one person feel sad may not affect another person. Typical sources of holiday sadness include:

- Stress
- Fatigue
- Unrealistic expectations
- Financial stress
- The inability to be with one's family and friends

Balancing the demands of shopping, parties, family obligations, and house guests may contribute to feelings of being overwhelmed and increased tension. People who do not view themselves as depressed may develop stress responses, such as:

- Headaches
- Excessive drinking
- Overeating

Tips for coping with holiday stress and depression:

- Make realistic expectations for the holiday season.
- Set realistic goals for yourself.
- Pace yourself. Do not take on more responsibilities than you can handle.
- Make a list and prioritize the important activities.
- Spend time with supportive and caring people.
- Live "in the moment" and enjoy the present.
- Look to the future with optimism.
- Don't set yourself up for disappointment and sadness by comparing today with the "good old days" of the past.
- If you are lonely, try volunteering some of your time to help others.
- Keep track of your holiday spending.

The City's Office of Employee Health promotes health and increases well being among City employees and their families by providing education and counseling about physical and mental health. Please call (505) 768-3080 for more information on the City's Office of Employee Health.

Source: <http://www.medicinenet.com>

Holidays the Healthy Way

The holiday season means a lot of holiday gatherings with large amounts of food. During the holiday season we tend to eat and drink a lot more calories. As you enjoy the holidays, remember to eat in moderation and stay physically active. The holidays are in full swing, which means lots of family, fun...and *FOOD!* But it doesn't have to mean extra pounds. Even holiday treats can fit into a healthy eating plan. The key is balance and moderation.

To avoid holiday weight gain, balance the calories you consume with the calories you burn. Physical activity and moderate food choices will help. The tips below are gifts you can give yourself and your family to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Let the Holiday Spirit Move You!

If you make your family time active, you will become healthier and have fun doing so. Be adventurous and try something new, but also choose something you enjoy.

- Stick to your regular exercise routine as much as possible. Especially during the holidays, plan your physical activity routine in advance don't leave it up to chance.
- Play some backyard football or frisbee with children and adults before the big holiday dinner or during football half-time.
- Dance or exercise to your favorite holiday music.
- Make a New Year's resolution with friends to start a daily walking group.
- Be physically active to avoid or relieve the holiday stress.

Healthy Holiday Eating

It's easy to overindulge during the holidays.

- Overcome the urge to overeat. Remember holiday parties are a time to celebrate with family and friends, not just food.
- Make sure to watch portion sizes and select one or two of your favorites from the host of tempting foods.
- Leave those extra calories behind — limit your intake of foods high in fat or added sugar.
- If you drink alcohol, do so in moderation.

A Present Packed with a Colorful Variety

For a great holiday gift, try going to your farmer's market or grocery store and selecting fresh fruits and vegetables. Place all your tasty treats in a basket, and you have a present packed with tasty fruits and vegetables.

Source : www.cdc.gov

Its Still Cold and Flu Season! Keep Your Immune System Strong

What is the immune system?

The immune system is a network of cells and organs in your body that work together to defend you against illness. Your immune system blocks germs like foreign bacteria and viruses from getting into your body. Acting as a powerful "search and destroy" task force, your body deploys a host of immune cell forces that are designed to hunt down the unwanted germs and ultimately work to destroy them. The immune system provides the human body with an innate ability to manufacture antibodies (proteins) that work to destroy abnormal or foreign cells. These antibodies not only help fend off common illnesses like the flu or a cold, but they also play a role in protecting you against diseases like cancer and heart disease.

You also have a second protective immune response known as the "cell-mediated immune system." This response involves immune system cells rather than antibodies. These immune system cells are called either helper or killer cells, and they help your body create memory of past defenses against the infection caused by viruses or bacteria.

Once the body identifies a pathogen (invader) again, it calls upon the memory of the previous infection and sets out to destroy the invader before the infection spreads. When you get a flu shot you're getting a deliberate but harmless form of the pathogen so that your immune cells can react, learn, and remember how to produce antibodies to fight the pathogen.

What causes the immune system to weaken?

Your immune system can lose some of its protective effects when your body is constantly subjected to negative health habits such as a poor diet, little sleep, and too much stress. This is why it is not surprising that doctors frequently recommend certain lifestyle changes as a way to optimize the function of your immune system.

Learn how to relax:

A high level of stress will cause the body to produce a steady cascade of stress hormones such as cortisol and adrenaline. These stress hormones will suppress the immune system and negatively impact your body's ability to stay well. Current research suggests that reducing levels of stress through relaxation techniques, regular exercise, and coping skills help your body maintain physical and emotional health. Moderate exercise three to five times a week

also increases immune function by flushing out stress hormones and increasing antibodies. Be careful though, as working out too much (overtraining) can run down the immune system.

Get your rest:

Get plenty of sleep every night. Prolonged sleep deprivation wears down immune protection while getting adequate rest each night helps to boost your defenses. Try to aim for 7 to 8 hours sleep for the best immune function. Tips for improving your quality of sleep include:

- Keep a regular sleep cycle
- Create an ideal sleep environment
- Decrease your caffeine consumption
- Move the TV out of the bedroom
- Avoid alcohol and nicotine
- Avoid eating before bed
- Clear your mind before bedtime

Make food your medicine:

It is wise to avoid refined sugar as it is known to upset body chemistry and weaken your immune system. A well balanced diet can help maintain your immune system. The following nutritional tips are recommended for strengthening your immune system:

- Eat a variety of fruits and vegetables
- Choose foods high in antioxidants
- Keep hydrated: At least eight 8 oz glasses of water, or insure that your urine is always clear
- Avoid caffeine in excess
- Include fresh herbs and spices in your meals
- Consume an adequate amount of fiber (30-40g/day)
- Add Omega 3 oils to your diet
- Include more fish and limit red meats whenever possible

Source: Wellness Councils of America &
www.medicinenet.com

Vegetable of the Month



Parsnips

Parsnips look like a pale carrot and are actually a relative of the carrot, celeriac, and parsley root. Commonly found in Europe, this root vegetable arrived to the United States with the colonists. Popular in the 19th and early 20th centuries for its celery flavor and nutty fragrance, this vegetable was often used in recipes that called for caloric decadence.

Parsnips are available year round with a peak from fall into spring. They are often displayed with the parsley root, so be sure you know which is a parsnip. Parsley roots are typically sold with their feathery greens whereas parsnips are sold by the root.

Recipe: Cherry Pepper Salad

Makes 4 servings (½ cup servings each)
Each serving equals 1/2 cup of fruit or vegetables
Ingredients

2 medium parsnips, peeled and cut in ¾" x ¼" strips
2 medium carrots, peeled and cut in ¾" x ¼" strips
1 tsp olive oil
1/8 tsp salt
1/8 tsp black pepper

Place in steamer basket over boiling water and steam for 15 minutes, lifting cover periodically during steaming to release steam and acids that can contribute to bitterness. Check for desired tenderness at 15 minutes; cook longer if softer texture is desired.

Remove from steamer basket, empty water from pan, return parsnips and carrots to pan and season lightly with olive oil, salt and fresh ground pepper. Shake or stir gently to coat with seasonings.

Serve immediately or leave partially covered to conserve heat until ready to serve.

Source: www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov

Hand Washing Basics

The 4 Principles of Hand Awareness

- WASH your hands when they are dirty and BEFORE eating.
- DO NOT cough into your hands.
- DO NOT sneeze into your hands.
- Above all, DO NOT put your fingers into youreyes, nose or mouth!

Hand washing Guide

- Wet Hands
- Soap Up
- Scrub up [Wash 15 seconds between fingers, wrists, under fingernails and back of hands]
- Rinse Off
- Towel Dry

Source: www.henrythehand.com



Topics you would like us to discuss in City WellNews?

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